REMARKS

As proposed in the above-identified Office Action, Fig. 3 has been amended to identify mirror "3a", and Figs. 6 and 7 have been identified as "PRIOR ART", in a separate communication which is being forwarded herewith to present replacement drawing sheets.

Applicants acknowledge with thanks the Examiner's correction of U.S. Pat. No. 5,847,887 on PTO Form 1449.

With regard to the claims of the application, objections were raised in the Office Action, as well as suggestions for overcoming some of those objections. In response, the claims have been amended (a) to delete the term "optical element" as referred to on Page 4 of the Office Action, (b) to correct the use of the term "non-circular diaphragm" as referred to on Page 5 thereof, (c) to delete the phrase "pixel arrangement direction" as also referred to on Page 5, and (d) to provide the proper antecedent basis for the main and sub-scanning directions as referred to on Page 6 of the Office Action.

The claims were also rejected as being anticipated by the cited European Patent document EP 1239655A2 . In response, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 1-6, as now amended, are patentably distinct over that reference as a result of their requirement that at least one of the plurality of off-axial reflective surfaces satisfies the condition of "$4/3 \times LY \leq LX$, where LX is a length of an off-axial reflective surface in the main scanning direction, and LY is a length of that off-axial reflective surface in the sub-scanning direction. By providing this feature, the effect of miniaturizing the imaging optical system or reducing the size thereof is obtained.

In this regard, the cited EP reference does not disclose the above-characterized features of the claimed invention. Specifically, Figs. 1A and 1B in that reference, as relied upon in the Office Action, differ from each other in size and in the positions of line sensor 5 therein. Therefore, it is impossible to compare those figures appropriately. Furthermore, in Fig. 1B, the length in the X direction can be known, but the length in the Y direction cannot be known because it is in a direction on the projection surface along a minor axis of the surface.

Some of the claims, including independent Claim 1, were also rejected as being anticipated by the cited Brandestini patent. However, the image reading system of that reference also fails to disclose the above-characterized features of Applicants' Claim 1. For example, the elements designated by the reference numerals 620 and 621, which are pointed out by the Examiner, are plane mirrors, and the element 611 is a toroidal mirror. That is, there is no comparable off-axial reflective surface in the Brandestini patent.

Finally, some of the claims were also rejected as being anticipated by the cited Kimura patent, but that reference also fails to disclose the above-mentioned feature of Applicants' amended Claim 1. Instead, in the Kimura patent there is a description of a "photographic optical system" which is not an imaging reading optical system as set forth in the amended claims of this application. Therefore, it is impossible in the Kimura reference to define the main scanning direction and the sub-scanning direction, or to discern the related requirements as now set forth in Claim 1.

For all of these various reasons it is believed that each of Claims 1-6 is now allowable, and the issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance is solicited.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our address given below.

Respectfully submitted,

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